

In the Claims:

Please cancel claims 1, 2, 7-14, 20 and 23, replace claims 3, 5, 21 and 24, and add new claims 29-39, all as shown below.

Claims 1-2. (Cancelled)

3. (Currently Amended): ~~The~~ A unitary spring system end cap as recited in claim 2, for supporting an article, comprising:

a platform portion adapted to support at least a portion of the article, the platform being generally arranged in a first plane; and

a sidewall structure including:

an inner wall connected with said platform portion,

an outer wall forming an acute angle relative to a second plane perpendicular to said first plane,

a spring system connected between said inner wall and said outer wall, and

a rib protruding from said outer wall;

wherein the spring system is operably connected with the rib; and

wherein a contact surface on an outer face of each of the at least one ribs is formed along a plane perpendicular to a plane formed by said platform portion generally parallel to the second plane.

4. (Original): The unitary spring system end cap as recited in claim 3, wherein when the at least one rib is impacted, the at least one rib can engage the at least one spring system.

5. (Currently Amended): The unitary spring system end cap as recited in claim [1] 3, wherein said sidewall structure includes a plurality of said spring systems formed end to end, wherein each spring system is connected with said outer wall along a ridge forming a plurality of arcs connected end to end along the length of said sidewall structure.

6. (Original): The unitary spring system end cap as recited in claim 5, wherein each of the at least one spring systems is operably connected with a rib.

Claims 7-14. (Canceled)

15. (Withdrawn): A unitary spring system end cap for supporting an article, comprising:  
a platform portion adapted to support at least a portion of the article;  
at least one bulbous indentation formed in said platform portion; and  
a sidewall structure having a length and including:  
an inner wall connected with said platform portion,  
an outer wall forming an acute angle relative to said platform portion, and  
at least one spring system connected between said inner wall and said outer wall, said  
spring system including at least one bellows.

16. (Withdrawn): The unitary spring system end cap as recited in claim 15, wherein when said platform portion is impacted the at least one bulbous feature is adapted to collapse.

17. (Withdrawn): The unitary spring system end cap as recited in claim 16, comprising two bulbous features formed such that each of the bulbous features are centered along a minor axis of the platform portion and symmetrically spaced about a center of the platform portion along a major axis of the platform portion.

18. (Withdrawn): The unitary spring system end cap as recited in claim 16, wherein each of the bulbous features is formed such that the platform collapses away from a fragile portion of the article.

19. (Withdrawn): A unitary spring system end cap for supporting an article, comprising:  
a platform portion adapted to support at least a portion of the article;

at least one bulbous indentation formed in said platform portion; and  
a sidewall structure including:

an inner wall connected with said platform portion,  
an outer wall forming an acute angle relative to said platform portion,  
at least one spring system connected between said inner wall and said outer wall, said  
spring system including at least one bellows, and  
at least one rib protruding from said outer wall.

20. (Canceled)

21. (Currently Amended): ~~The A system of claim 20, for supporting an article, comprising:~~  
a first end cap including:

a first platform portion adapted to support a first portion of the article, the first platform  
being generally arranged in a first plane;

a sidewall structure having:

a first inner wall connected with said first platform portion and surrounding the  
periphery of said first platform portion;

a first outer wall forming an acute angle relative to an axis perpendicular to said first  
plane and surrounding the periphery of said first inner wall;

at least one first spring system connected between said first inner wall and said first  
outer wall, each of said at least one first spring system including at least one bellow; and

at least one first rib protruding from said first outer wall; and

a second end cap including:

a second platform portion adapted to support a second portion of the article, the second  
platform being generally arranged in a second plane;

a sidewall structure having:

a second inner wall connected with said second platform portion and surrounding  
the periphery of said second platform portion;

a second outer wall forming an acute angle relative to an axis perpendicular to said second plane and surrounding the periphery of said second inner wall;  
at least one second spring system connected between said second inner wall and said second outer wall, each of said at least one second spring system including at least one bellow; and  
at least one second rib protruding from said second outer wall; and  
wherein ~~each of~~ the at least one first rib and the at least one second rib ~~have a has an outer face substantially perpendicular to a plane formed by one of the first and second platform portions planes.~~

22. (Withdrawn): The system of claim 20, further comprising:

at least one first bulbous structure formed on the first platform portion; and  
at least one second bulbous structure formed on the second platform portion.

23. (Canceled)

24. (Currently Amended): ~~The A system of claim 23, for supporting a laptop computer, comprising:~~  
a first end cap including:

a first platform portion adapted to support a first portion of the laptop computer, the first platform being generally arranged in a first plane;

a sidewall structure having:

a first inner wall connected with said first platform portion and surrounding the periphery of said first platform portion;

a first outer wall forming an acute angle relative to an axis perpendicular to said first plane and surrounding the periphery of said first inner wall;

at least one first spring system connected between said first inner wall and said first outer wall, each of said at least one first spring system including at least one bellow; and

at least one first rib protruding from said first outer wall; and

a second end cap including:

a second platform portion adapted to support a second portion of the laptop computer,  
the second platform being generally arranged in a second plane;  
a sidewall structure having:  
a second inner wall connected with said second platform portion and surrounding  
the periphery of said second platform portion;  
a second outer wall forming an acute angle relative to an axis perpendicular to said  
second plane and surrounding the periphery of said second inner wall;  
at least one second spring system connected between said second inner wall and  
said second outer wall, each of said at least one second spring system including at least one bellow; and  
at least one second rib protruding from said second outer wall;  
wherein ~~each~~ of the at least one first rib and the at least one second rib ~~have a~~ ~~has an~~ outer face  
substantially perpendicular to a plane formed by one of the first and second platform portions planes.

25. (Withdrawn): The system of claim 23, further comprising:

at least one first bulbous structure formed on the first platform portion; and  
at least one second bulbous structure formed on the second platform portion.

26. (Withdrawn): A system for supporting a plurality of integrated circuits held one or more trays,  
comprising:  
a first end cap including:

a first platform portion adapted to support a first portion of the one or more trays;  
a sidewall structure having:  
a first inner wall connected with said first platform portion and surrounding the  
periphery of said first platform portion;  
a first outer wall forming an acute angle relative to said first platform portion and  
surrounding the periphery of said first inner wall;  
at least one first spring system connected between said first inner wall and said first  
outer wall, each of said at least one first spring system including at least one bellow; and

at least one first rib protruding from said first outer wall; and  
a second end cap including:

a second platform portion adapted to support a second portion of the one or more trays;  
a sidewall structure having:

a second inner wall connected with said second platform portion and surrounding  
the periphery of said second platform portion;

a second outer wall forming an acute angle relative to said second platform portion  
and surrounding the periphery of said second inner wall;

at least one second spring system connected between said second inner wall and  
said second outer wall, each of said at least one second spring system including at least one bellow; and  
at least one second rib protruding from said second outer wall.

27. (Withdrawn): The system of claim 26, wherein each of the at least one first rib and the at least  
one second rib has an outer face substantially perpendicular to a plane formed by one of the first and  
second platform portions.

28. (Withdrawn): The system of claim 26, further comprising:

at least one first bulbous structure formed on the first platform portion; and  
at least one second bulbous structure formed on the second platform portion.

29. (New): A unitary spring system end cap for use in retaining and protecting at least one fragile item  
within a carton including at least a first surface and a second surface extending from the first surface, the  
unitary spring system end cap comprising:

a base for resting on or against the first surface of the carton;

a platform adapted to support at least a portion of the at least one item;

a sidewall structure that suspends said platform above said base, said sidewall structure including  
an inner wall and an outer wall, said inner wall connected with the platform, and said outer wall extending  
from said base;

wherein said outer wall extends from said base such that an acute angle is formed between said outer wall and the second surface of the carton and such that a gap exists between the second surface of the carton and said outer wall; and

a rib projecting outward from said outer wall, at least a portion of the rib projecting a distance that varies with the gap such that said portion is adapted to contact the second surface of the carton.

30. (New): The end cap of claim 29, further comprising a spring system connected between said inner wall and said outer wall.

31. (New): The end cap of claim 30, wherein when the rib is impacted, the rib can engage said spring system.

32. (New): The end cap of claim 30, wherein said sidewall structure includes a plurality of said spring systems formed end to end, wherein each spring system is connected with said outer wall along a ridge forming a plurality of arcs connected end to end along the length of said sidewall structure.

33. (New): The end cap of claim 29, wherein said rib includes a contact surface, the contact surface being generally parallel to the second plane.

34. (New): The end cap of claim 29, wherein said rib is approximately centered along said spring system.

35. (New): The end cap of claim 33, wherein said contact surface has an approximately trapezoidal shape.

36. (New): The end cap of claim 33, wherein said contact surface has an approximately rectangular shape.

37. (New): The end cap of claim 3, wherein said rib is approximately centered along said spring system.

38. (New): The end cap of claim 3, wherein said contact surface has an approximately trapezoidal shape.

39. (New): The end cap of claim 3, wherein said contact surface has an approximately rectangular.